

VZCZCXRO4005  
PP RUEHPA  
DE RUEHRY #0532/01 2601503  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 161503Z SEP 08  
FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2936  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000532

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2018

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [GV](#)

SUBJECT: CONTINUED RUMBLINGS OF DISCONTENT IN CONAKRY

REF: CONAKRY 0510

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. For nearly a week and a half, Conakry has experienced a number of random, spontaneous demonstrations throughout the city. Reportedly protesting a lack of electricity, youths have been blocking major traffic intersections at various times by throwing rocks and burning tires. The anti-riot police have responded and dispersed crowds quickly using tear gas. There appears to be a growing sense of unease in the capital, but for the time being, these demonstrations seem to represent generalized rumblings of discontent in what continues to be a highly volatile political situation. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) What appear to be spontaneous demonstrations have become the norm in Conakry over the past ten days, with random protests blocking major traffic intersections at least once a day. The demonstrations have been attributed to unorganized youths angry about the government's continued failure to provide electricity and regular access to water. Youths have resorted to rock throwing, tire burning, and in some cases, burning of vehicles. Guinea's anti-riot police have responded to the demonstrations quickly, using tear gas to disperse crowds. Although the demonstrators tend to scatter almost immediately, a new demonstration often pops up in a different part of the city. These demonstrations have occurred primarily in predominantly Fulani (Peuhl) neighborhoods, with a few exceptions.

¶3. (SBU) Building on similar demonstrations last week (reftel), Monday started off with renewed protests beginning at about 9:30 at two major intersections. Towards noon, protestors were burning tires on Castro Bridge, which controls access to the downtown area. Anti-riot police had responded to the scene with tear gas, and there were reports of guns being fired into the air. The Charge, who was on his way downtown for an USAID signing ceremony, was forced to turn back as were several other Mission employees on official business. After about an hour, the police had cleared the bridge and traffic was reported to be moving at a slow crawl.

¶4. (SBU) Market women at Guinea's largest open air market, Marche Medina, attacked a local police office Monday morning after "volunteer" police officers reportedly destroyed some of their market stalls the night before. According to contacts, a confrontation ensued that lasted for at least an hour. The local press reported that seven women and three volunteer police were injured. (COMMENT. There are a number of volunteer police officers, which are people in uniform who have volunteered for police service, but have not been officially hired. They do not receive a salary, and are known for collecting their living off of the citizens they are "policing." END COMMENT).

¶5. (SBU) As of 12:00 on September 15, Conakry has been relatively quiet, although the heavy rains earlier this

morning may have deterred possible protestors. RSO LES reported a gathering of a significant number of people, with many of them carrying stones and cement blocks, earlier this morning. However, the police reportedly responded quickly and dispersed the crowd before the protest could get underway.

16. (C) The government continues to plead for calm and patience. Although these demonstrations are commonly viewed as spontaneous events, there appears to be a growing sense of unease in the capital. Prominent youth leaders are planning a massive youth movement to take place sometime in the next month (septel) while government leaders have been handing out cash to youth groups in an attempt to buy support and calm the situation.

17. (C) The brother of the Mayor of Kaloum (located in Conakry) called RSO LES and told him that the Minister Secretary General of the Presidency, Alpha Ibrahima Keira, had told the Mayor to be "cautious" over the next few days. Keira had reportedly convened a meeting with a Captain Konate (a newly appointed army officer) and Claude Pivi, who was responsible for leading the military mutiny in May. According to source, Keira discussed the president's "rapidly ailing health."

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

18. (C) Guinea tends to experience brief spurts of increased civil unrest with threats of a broader civil movement, but then eventually returns to business as usual. At this point,

CONAKRY 00000532 002 OF 002

it is unclear whether this period will be another of those "spurts," or whether it will eventually manifest into something bigger. A/DCM has already fielded questions from concerned external observers this week, including a visiting diplomat from the Canadian Embassy and an analyst with International Crisis Group, both of whom are based in Dakar. Both contacts essentially asked whether "there is anything to worry about." For the time being, we are seeing what appear to be generalized rumblings of discontent in what continues to be a highly volatile political situation. END COMMENT.

BROKENSHIRE